

Giving in the Kingdom of Heaven

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Grace and peace and provision and love to you through Jesus the Lord of glory!

I have become convinced by the Scriptures, by past involvement with witchcraft and with others who were pursuing that craft, and by things done prophetically alone and with others who were pursuing the Kingdom of Heaven, that the only difference between an act that could qualify as witchcraft and a prophetic act is that the Spirit of the Living God led someone to do the prophetic act. Even the killing of animals or other sacrifices that are parts of some rituals of witchcraft are shadows of sacrifices commanded by Yahweh.

If I am right about that, then some of our best “good deeds” could be on the wrong side of the line... I believe that we must be led by the King in order to be doing works that are truly righteous deeds. He has a very recognizable habit of giving one person instructions to cast out demons or prophesy or evangelize in one way while requiring that another servant do the ministry in a completely different way. He may require great sacrifices from us in one season of our lives, and make smaller demands and give us great liberty in another season. One servant's life may be in a very different season from another's, so if we are looking at each other too intently rather than at our Leader, we may take up the wrong yoke or burden. Even the greatest demands are light and easy when we see them placed on our shoulders by His hands, and even the lightest load wrongly recommended by our neighbor can bring us the sharpest rebuke or fiercest wilderness experience from the One Who wants to guide our every step.

Every time we make a rule about how things should be or can't be done, we are insulating ourselves from having to listen to the Holy Spirit about that issue in the future. When we are immature, we need lots of rules. As we mature, we simply need to know His voice and heed it quickly. Before I surrendered to Him, the fact that it was against the law of man and God to kill someone did not stop me one night from picking up a gun and searching the county for a man that I intended to kill. Thank God I did not find him. I would have killed him if I had found him and he had not restored to me what he had stolen from me. Today, it could be legal to kill someone, but because I have the Spirit that so loved the world that He sent Jesus into it working in my heart, I would love them instead. I have graduated in that place from needing a rule to having a Ruler. When we are learning how to ride a bicycle, we need training wheels. When we have learned how to ride, the training wheels hinder us from fast turns.

Paul wrote to the church at Galatia: (Gal 4:1-7)

¹ Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, ² but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. ³ Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
NKJV

Many people with very effective ministries see their successes as the result of their actions, and don't perceive that it is always the love of God and His grace that has made them succeed in their work, not just the particular thing they did. They do not realize that another person could do the same thing and find no success in it at all. In 2 Kings 13, we find this story: (2 Kings 13:14-19)

¹⁴ Elisha became sick, and later he died from this sickness. King Jehoash of Israel went to visit Elisha. Jehoash cried for him and said, "My father, my father! Is it time for the chariot of Israel and its horses?"

¹⁵ Elisha said to Jehoash, "Take a bow and some arrows."

Jehoash took a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶ Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." Jehoash put his hand on the bow. Then Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷ Elisha said, "Open the east window." Jehoash opened the window. Then Elisha said, "Shoot."

Jehoash shot. Then Elisha said, "This is the Lord's arrow of victory over Aram! You will defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you destroy them."

¹⁸ Elisha said, "Take the arrows." Jehoash took the arrows. Then Elisha said to him, "Hit on the ground."

Jehoash hit the ground three times. Then he stopped. ¹⁹ The man of God was angry with Jehoash. Elisha said, "You should have hit five or six times! Then you would have defeated Aram until you destroyed it! But now, you will defeat Aram only three times."

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Elisha empowered King Jehoash over his enemies with two prophetic acts. They were effective in changing what was going on. Because the Spirit of the Lord directed Elisha to command the King, these were *prophetic acts*, but if I presume without such instruction or Spirit leadership that I can take arrows in my hand, bang them on the ground and change the battle I am in with my neighbor or enemy, I am practicing *witchcraft*, not *prophecy*. Even in the event involving Jehoash, because of the way he did the prophetic act, there was a limit to its blessing.

If in some situation the Spirit of the Lord gives me a strategy for victory, that same strategy will not work in another battle necessarily. When Joshua had a victory in Jericho, it was through the Spirit of God empowering a prophetic act of screaming and blowing shofars and trumpets. When Joshua presumed to advance against Ai without seeking the strategy for victory, he was defeated. When he inquired of Yahweh what to do, he had success. If the Lord tells me to give away a car (which He has done) and then blesses me by causing someone to give me money (which He then also did) I would be wrong to teach everyone in earshot that if they want money, they should give away their cars. When I did it, I was being obedient. If someone else watched and decided they should do it too, they would only be presumptuous. The seven sons of Sceva were practicing witchcraft, but Paul was casting out demons by the finger of God. They tried casting a demon out of a man

“... in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches...” The demon, instead of being cast out, cast them out, and they ran for their lives, “naked and bleeding,” according to Luke in Acts 19:11-20.

There is not one place in the New Testament in which a person who is a believer in the Blood of Jesus is instructed to tithe. Instead, when Jesus is teaching how things work in the Kingdom, He says things like, “You have read in the Law, ‘so and so’, but I say to you...” Look in Matthew 5 at the several times He makes comparisons between what His Father commanded the Jews through Moses and what He commands or requires of His followers. It is always multiplied in extent or intensity. It is more because He has given us His Spirit! We are capable of greater deeds than anyone before - even Jesus, according to His own testimony! We are going to have very great opportunities to bring glory to God if we will walk in faith.

What He teaches regarding stewardship of His stuff is far beyond wimpy and stingy tithing. What was required of the men to whom the master gave the money when he went away on a trip? What they were given could have been gold, silver, or even wheat or something - talents are simply weight measures, so we are not clearly told what the exact value of what they were given was. The man who had received 10 talents of whatever it was gave back to the master 200%. So did the man who had been trusted with 5 talents of the stuff. Two hundred percent, not ten. How shocking. The guy who *only gave back 100%* was called **“wicked and lazy.”**

Unless someone has received a word from the Spirit of Prophecy, when a ministry instructs you to give to them so that your financial needs may be met, they are practicing witchcraft by luring you with the financial benefit, and if you give them the money, you are practicing witchcraft, too, knowingly or unknowingly. A spirit of witchcraft will empower some financial deals and make them productive, but not without great cost. If the Spirit of the Lord instructs you to do something and you do it, you are putting yourself in a position or condition in which He will pour out His provision to you. There are training wheels that the Spirit will lend to you as you grow from spiritual infant to powerful son or daughter of the Living God, but at some point He will require you to do only what you see your Father in Heaven doing. Anything else you do, no matter how much success that training wheel has brought in the past, no matter how much success you see other saints having riding that wheel right now, will only hinder your success and cost you.

When your decisions on what to give to what ministry are directly related to your own needs, you are not *giving* anything. When you are seeking the leadership of the Spirit regarding what to give to whom, He will sometimes embarrass you by causing you to ask one ministry to pray for you or bless you some other way while giving a generous gift to another ministry. He may require a gift to a homeless or otherwise poor person that is more than a tithe. It is good to have standards that you sense from the past the Lord has led you to give at, but that needs to continue to increase as you mature. If you give someone a birthday gift, you expect no benefit from it. You love them, so you give them a gift. If they do not then give you a gift, it does not lessen your love for them, or decrease the likelihood of them receiving a gift next year on their birthday. It is a gift. If I get in a birthday club,

everyone gives something to each member on their birthday. It is a requirement of membership though, not a *gift*. If you give a gift in the Kingdom of Heaven, your style is like Jesus described in Luke 14.

There, He promises a blessing for giving. That seed is not sown in my own garden, but in my neighbor's. I trust my God that as I obey Him and give away what would have paid my own bills, He will meet my needs by His grace and in His love and His fresh-each-day mercy.

I believe that the Lord is calling you to a higher perspective and a higher place to stand. He is calling you to the place where you ask Him what to do with what He has entrusted to you, without any guidelines other than that you know His voice. Some of His answers will shock you that they seem to be such small gifts, but they may be the exact amount someone needs to finish paying their light bill, and He will be glorified by your participation in His precise blessing of one of His children. Some of His answers may be shocking by their largeness, but when you empty yourself you will find space to only begin to receive what He pours back in your lap.

When we gave away a car once, we were without a second car for several months. Finally we found what we felt was the replacement for it. We borrowed the \$3600 required to buy it. Within a week, someone gave us a check for \$10,000. Once when someone stole a car from us, we felt that we were supposed to purchase a van to replace it so that we could carry the people around who were gathering with us as a congregation at the time, most of whom had no vehicles. We were praying for a missionary before he left the country at the time, and he asked us how to pray for us. We shared that we were feeling led to buy the van, but that the one we were feeling led to buy seemed to be a little more expensive than we felt was appropriate. We prayed, and he left the country. Two days later we got a check that he had mailed before he left town. It was \$1,000. A missionary gave us money! When I told the guy who was selling the van about it, and that it had convinced me that the Lord was telling us to purchase it (I had shared our concerns about the cost with him earlier) he burst into tears and dropped the price by another \$1,000!

We did not receive those financial blessings because we were tithers. We give more than 1/10 of what comes into our hands, but that is not what opens the doors to God's provision or the answer to our prayers. It is because we are seeking from Him what to do with what for whom, expecting Him to answer, and then trusting Him for what we need, *based on His love and character*, not because we have enacted some law. He is not interested in the mature sons and daughters in His household plodding along with laws and principles that have to work for us because He said them. He is looking for us to want to bless the hungry out of our hunger for fellowship with Him. He wants us visiting the sick and imprisoned out of our desperation for His company there. See the concept in Matthew 25. Use all of your resources to find Him. Sell all that you have and buy the field that is hiding the treasure.